

Domestic Adoption Information Guide

for birth parents



**Children of
All Nations**

Our Core Commitment

Children of All Nations at 248 Addie Roy Rd. #A102 Austin, Texas 78746

Toll Free 1.877.827.5226 | Text/24 Hour Hotline 1.512.947.2334

Headquarters 512.323.9595 | Fax line 512.323.9599

www.childrenofallnations.com | domestic@childrenofallnations.com

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Dear Birth Parents,

Thank you for taking the time to read through this Guide. The fact that you are considering options for your child and becoming more educated about adoption shows incredible love, strength, and maturity. I admire and commend you for that. I know you are facing a difficult situation filled with many unknowns and complex emotions.

Facing an unplanned pregnancy may feel scary and lonely, but we, at Children of All Nations, are here to let you know that you are not alone. Did you know that approximately half of all US pregnancies are “unintended?” You deserve to have support during this emotional journey.



As a Family Counselor, my joy has always been supporting individuals and families to confidently move forward in a path that feels healthy and whole for themselves and other loved ones in their life. As we work together, my desire for you is that you feel cared for and supported. I hope that you will feel more educated and informed about all the options available to you, and then move forward in a confident decision that supports the desires you have for you and your child.

If a birthmother determines that adoptive placement is her preferred plan, she gets to determine what level of involvement or openness feels most comfortable. Birthmothers will have the opportunity to look through adoptive parent profiles and select a family based on qualities that are important to her. She is always welcome to interview prospective adoptive families and meet with them in person when possible. Birthmothers choose adoption plans based on what feels comfortable to them and what they desire for their child.

Through our other adoption programs over the last 16 years, more than 5,000 children have been placed with forever families. Children of All Nations has a history of providing quality services to families and our agency has become one of the most trusted leaders in creating adoption plans. We desire to bring this same level of service and support to our Domestic Adoption program. I look forward to working alongside you on this journey.

Warmly,

Emily Cox, LMFT
Adoption Counselor

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Did you know?

- Approximately half of all US pregnancies are “unintended.”
- About one-third of all births are welcomed by unmarried women.
- Every year in the United States, over 20,000 newborn infants are voluntarily placed for adoption.
- There are approximately 1.5 to 2 million US children living with adoptive parents.
- Around 15 percent of non-stepparent adoptions are domestic infant adoptions.
- Of the women who place their children for adoption, only 25 percent are teenagers.

You are not alone!

We know this may be a difficult and confusing time in your life, and you need to know your options. With Children of All Nations' domestic program, you will have access to FREE pregnancy tests. We have counselors available to help you sort through your options and help you make decisions that are right for you and your child, all FREE of charge to you. This does not always lead to adoption as a decision, and we respect that. We do not lock you into a contract when you decide to work with our agency.

Only you can determine the right path for you and your child!

If you determine that adoptive placement is your preferred option, Children of All Nations (CAN) will assist you in finding a family that will provide your child with the type of environment that you envision for him or her. We have many loving families that are dreaming of adopting a special child into their lives. You will be able to look through detailed family profiles and determine if there is a good match for your child. You are encouraged to interview prospective adoptive families and meet with them in person whenever possible. You can be assured that all of the families presented to you by Children of All Nations have been thoroughly screened and assessed for their appropriateness to adopt.

Children of All Nations values the role of the birth mother and the magnitude of the decision you are making.

When you choose adoption through CAN's domestic program, we encourage you to consider an open adoption. This can provide ongoing contact following the adoption, ranging from the occasional sharing of pictures and letter, to exchanging phone calls and even in-person visits. In most cases, this is the most beneficial option for your child, as well as for you, the birth parent. Knowing your child is happy and well cared for throughout their life will help to put you at ease. Not all birth parents are comfortable with having contact, and if that is your preference, we respect that decision. Throughout the process, your counselor will assist you and the adoptive family in working out a plan that is comfortable and positive for everyone.

Approximately 90% of birth mothers today have met the adoptive parents of their children and a majority of birth parents choose the adoptive family by reviewing family profiles. Current research shows that birth mothers who have been able to select the adoptive family for their child and have ongoing contact and knowledge, results in lower levels of grief and greater peace of mind with their adoption decisions.

Through an open adoption, a pregnant woman does not have to make the decision to keep her baby or give them up forever. Open adoption is the middle ground. A majority of birth mothers today select and meet the adoptive family and work cooperatively to determine the right amount of contact between both families. You will have the opportunity to see that your child is safe and thriving, and your child will have the opportunity to know you, his birth mother. In most adoptions, pictures and letters are shared a couple times a year. In some, telephone contact or face-to-face visits are arranged. Every adoption is unique and custom-tailored to the families involved.

For more information, please contact us at 1-877-827-5226 to speak with an adoption counselor.



uncomfortable with doing this yourself, your counselor may contact the family for you, or assist in a conference call to gather further information and gain answers to your questions.

Matching

When you have chosen one family who you believe to be the most appropriate for your child, your counselor will contact the adoptive family to discuss your situation with them and mail your social, family, and medical information reports to them. Names and other identifying information will be removed before being sent to the family. You may also have another phone or in-person visit, if desired.

The identified family will have the option to pursue or decline this adoptive placement. If they wish to pursue, we refer to this as a potential "match" and your counselor will arrange for a match visit. It is preferred that this visit occurs face-to-face, but when that is not possible, phone contact is acceptable. Following your match visit, your counselor will speak with you and the identified adoptive family separately to determine if everyone agrees that this would be a positive adoptive placement. If so, your match is complete and you move into the pre-placement stage.

Pre-Placement and Future Planning

During the pre-placement phase, your counselor will maintain weekly contact with you. Your counselor will assist you and the adoptive family in creating a mutual adoption plan. This plan will include the type of contact desired during labor and delivery and the post-delivery hospital stay, as well as outlining the type of contact desired during post-placement and following the adoption. Your counselor understands that the relationship you develop with the adoptive family evolves over time, which also means that your adoption plan may also change.

This is a time where you and the adoptive family will have the opportunity to get to know each other better. If you are comfortable, you and the family can exchange phone calls and you can update them on the progress of your pregnancy and the baby's development. In return, they can provide you support and encouragement during your pregnancy. Some birth mothers are not comfortable with this type of arrangement and would prefer to communicate through the counselor only. In either case, your counselor will be there to support you every step of the way and assist you and the adoptive family in evaluating the adoption plan throughout the process.

Delivery

When you go into labor, you will contact your counselor, who will make arrangements to meet you and the adoptive family at the hospital. Your counselor will ensure that everyone respects the adoption plan you and the adoptive family have agreed upon. This will be a very emotional time, so having the adoption plan in place will help keep everyone's wishes in the forefront.

You may also experience some unexpected feelings at this time, so your adoption counselor will be there for you to help you process your feelings. You will decide what you need at this time and no one will pressure you into making any decisions right away. In fact, Texas law requires that a mother wait for at least 48 hours following the birth of a child to sign an Affidavit of Relinquishment of Parental Rights.

Preparation

Prior to making any decisions, you should research agencies and determine which is right for you. If you select our agency to facilitate your adoption, you may contact us by phone, email, text, or come by the office for a meeting. We offer free counseling to women experiencing a crisis pregnancy, regardless of the outcome of their choice. Some women may contact us knowing that adoption is their desired plan, but others are not sure what they want. Our counselors will assist you in exploring your options for your unexpected pregnancy and support you in determining the right path for you and your child. Adoption may not be right for everyone and we would not want to proceed with an adoption plan if it is not right for you.

If you choose to proceed with making an adoption plan, you will be assigned an adoption counselor, who will become your primary contact at Children of All Nations. If there is an involved birth father, he is also encouraged to participate. Your counselor will help you understand the ins and outs of the adoption process and will be there to support you through each step.

Application and Information

Once you decide to work with our agency, you will need to complete our agency's application paperwork, including Social and Family History Report, and the Medical History Report. Additionally, you will need to provide us with written confirmation of your pregnancy and details about your healthcare coverage (if you have any). If possible, it is best to include the birth father if he is aware of the pregnancy. Texas state law does not require you to notify the birth father, unless you are married to him; however, it is usually best to gain his consent to the adoption so as to give him the opportunity to learn about adoption options, provide medical and family history information, and avoid legal complications later. If your child's birth father is uninvolved, unknown, or unreachable, it is his responsibility to place his name on the Texas state paternity registry prior to the baby's one-month birthday. This is very important, as the birth father will need to consent to the adoption and relinquish his parental rights of the child. If the birth father cannot be located, and has not made claim to the child via the Texas Paternity Registry, the court will need to terminate his parental rights prior to finalizing the adoption. Your counselor will be there to assist you in gathering essential information and locating and contacting the birth father.

Selection

After you have completed the application and information process listed above, your counselor will help you explore the qualities that are most important to you when selecting an adoptive family for your child. You are the best candidate for choosing a family that will be a good fit for your child, and you are encouraged to take an active part in the selection process. Your counselor will present you with the profiles of qualified families who are appropriate for your situation and your child, and families who also meet your criteria.

You may also explore available adoptive families on the Children of All Nations website. You may come across a family that stands out to you as "the one." The reality is you will probably narrow options down to a few families to choose from. You are welcome to contact adoptive families to get a better feel for them and to ask pertinent questions. If you are

Relinquishment

In most cases, the birth mother signs the Affidavit of Relinquishment of Parental Rights soon after the 48 hour point and designates Children of All Nations as the managing conservator of the baby. Your adoption counselor with Children of All Nations then places the child in the care of the adoptive family, with their agreement to allow Children of All Nations to supervise the placement until the adoption is finalized.

The adoptive family will be able to leave the hospital with the baby. It is important for you to know that once you sign the Affidavit of Relinquishment, your decision becomes final and you may not change your mind.

Post-Placement and Finalization

After the Affidavit of Relinquishment is signed, the adoptive family returns home with the baby and the adoption can be finalized in court after six months.

During this time, you will be experiencing a myriad of feelings. You are encouraged to receive counseling to help you sort through those feelings. Your counselor will continue to be there to support you or refer you to an independent therapist, if you wish. The adoptive family and your counselor will maintain contact with you as it was previously agreed-upon and outlined in the adoption plan.

Post-Adoption

The benefit of open adoption is that saying goodbye at the hospital does not always mean saying goodbye forever. You will be able to have the amount of contact that you and the adoptive family pre-determined in your adoption plan. You will be able to see your child grow and develop, knowing that he or she is being well-cared-for by their adoptive family.

As time goes by, your child may have the opportunity to get to know you and have the confidence that you are also thriving. This is usually the healthiest situation all around and may help alleviate the insecure feelings that could arise when such details are unknown. Some people are concerned that an open arrangement may be confusing to a child. Similar to divorce, if handled with positive and cooperative interactions by the parents, the child may be reassured that everything in this situation is "okay." In turn, the child will also feel comfortable with being an adopted child.

If you decide to have no contact (or a closed adoption), you are at a minimum expected to contact Children of All Nations if you or a family member develops a genetic condition or terminal illness, or in the case of death of a biological child. Children of All Nations also agrees to contact you when any such information is brought to our attention. For this reason, it is important that you inform Children of All Nations if you move and provide your most up-to-date address and phone number.



Pregnancy Tests

Through our domestic program, you will have access to FREE pregnancy tests, should you need it. Our goal is to supply with you every piece of information you need to make an informed and educated decision for you and your baby.

Counseling

Through our domestic program, we also offer counseling services, in addition to placing services. If you're not sure what the best option is for you and your baby, we can help you figure it out. You do not need to make a commitment to adoption in order to receive our counseling services. The goal of our counseling is to provide you with information about pregnancy options, while extending professional, caring support during this confusing time in your life.

At Children of All Nations, we understand the importance of receiving accurate information about all of your options, allowing you to make a well-informed decision for you and your unborn baby. The decisions you make now are life-changing and need to be well thought out and made without feeling pressure from anyone else. Adoption counselors are available to help you navigate your options.

Should you choose adoption as the option for you and your baby, your counselor will help you explore the type of adoption plan you would be most comfortable with, as well as determine what qualities are most important to you when selecting an adoptive family.

As your adoption plan progresses through identifying and working with an adoptive family, developing a mutual adoption plan, labor and delivery, post-placement and post-adoption, counselors will be there every step of the way to provide you with emotional support and professional guidance.



Making the decision to create an adoption plan for your child is monumental. You have determined you are not ready to parent your baby and have chosen to provide him or her with the gift of life. You are also, in turn, hand-selecting an eligible individual or couple to parent your child in the way you envision, while providing the potential adoptive parent(s) an opportunity to parent when they may otherwise not have the chance. There is a lot going on in an adoptive situation and it affects many people. This pregnancy, and the choice of adoption, begins with you. It is important that you know your rights as a birth parent when making a decision to create an adoptive plan.

As a birth parent, you have the right to:

- Learn about your options and receive counseling
- Choose agencies
- Gain accurate information about the adoption process
- Have all of your questions answered
- Know what rights you are giving up through the adoption process
- Change your mind
- Make a decision without feeling pressured or obligated to someone else
- Select an adoptive family
- Receive financial help with reasonable expenses for pregnancy-related needs
- Retain an attorney

The Right to Learn About Your Options and Receive Counseling

When experiencing an unplanned pregnancy, you have many options from which to select. You must first decide if you are ready, willing, and able to parent your child. Professional counseling is highly recommended at this time and prior to making any decisions. If you determine that parenting is not an option for you now, you have other options available: adoption or abortion. The choice of adoption gives your child a chance at life, whereas abortion terminates the pregnancy altogether. If you choose life, you may consider placing your child with an extended family member or with a family that you believe will offer your child the life that you envision for him or her. You may select a family on your own or go through an agency, like Children of All Nations, that has available families to select from that are thoroughly screened, trained, and ready for adoption. Even if you select a family on your own, you have the option to create an adoption plan with that family through an agency, or just meet the legal obligations by finalizing independently with an adoption attorney. When going through an adoption agency, you are provided counseling, professional support and guidance in creating a mutually agreed-upon adoption plan, and are eligible for financial support during your pregnancy and post-partum period. If you are receiving counseling through an adoption agency and feel that they are not providing impartial support, you have the right to receive counseling from a professional who is independent from that agency.

Another option that you have in adoption is an open or closed arrangement. Most adoptions are now open, which means that the birth parents may select and meet the adoptive parents of their choice. Together, the birth parents and adoptive parents agree upon a certain amount of contact they will maintain during the pregnancy, labor and delivery, post-placement, and even post-adoption. Usually post-adoption contact consists of a semi-annual letter and picture sharing, but sometimes

includes telephone and in-person contact. It is important to note, however, that contact cannot be enforced by law following the adoption finalization. Adoption counselors at Children of All Nations does its best to educate birth parents and adoptive parents about the benefits of open adoption, and works to foster a healthy relationship between the birth and adoptive parents so that continued contact will be maintained as agreed-upon in the adoption plan. The choice for a closed adoption (where no future contact is desired) is no longer common, but this is your right to determine as a birth parent.

The Right to Choose Agencies

If you decide to pursue an adoption plan through an adoption agency (as opposed to an independently arranged adoption), it is important to do your research. Not all agencies are created equally. Every agency operates a little differently from one another and offers different services to birth parents. Some agencies are religion-based and others may have specific focus on the type of children they place or types of potential adoptive families they will accept. Be sure you research the agencies available to you and select one that you are confident in working with.

The Right to Gain Accurate Information About the Adoption Process

It is certainly important that birth parents know what to expect when entering into an adoption plan. There is ample information available on the Internet, and Children of All Nations does its best to provide as much accurate information as possible about the adoption process. Our adoption counselors are well-informed and are available to answer any questions you may have over the phone, by text, in-person, or by email. Do not hesitate to ask questions!

The Right to Have All Your Questions Answered

When it comes to adoption, there are many topics that are uncomfortable and scary. Regardless, as a birth parent considering voluntarily placing their child for adoption, it is essential that you ask any and all questions you may have, and that you receive honest answers. The birth parent's choice for adoption must be well-informed and based on accurate information in order for the adoption to be successful. An agency that hides the truth or is not readily forthcoming with information about adoption and birth parent rights is most likely not an agency you will want to entrust with your adoption.

The Right to Know What Rights You are Giving Up Through the Adoption Process

When a birth parent places their child for adoption, they are choosing to surrender their legal parental rights and transfer them to another set of parents or an individual.

Texas Family Code, Chapter 160, defines parental rights as belonging to:

- The birth mother (who "automatically" gains parental rights when her child is born)

- A man who is married to the child's mother at the time of the child's birth, even if it is known that he is not the actual birth father (referred to as the "presumed" father)
- A man who is not married to the birth mother but all parties acknowledge his paternity and he has signed an Acknowledgement of Paternity with the state or his paternity has been established by the court ("alleged" father)

Texas Family Code, Chapter 151.001, states that a parent of a child has the following rights and duties:

- The right to have physical possession, to direct the moral and religious training, and to designate the residence of the child;
- The duty of care, control, protection, and reasonable discipline of the child;
- The duty to support the child, including providing the child with clothing, food, shelter, medical and dental care, and education;
- The duty, except when a guardian of the child's estate has been appointed, to manage the estate of the child, including the right as an agent of the child to act in relation to the child's estate if the child's action is required by a state, the United States, or a foreign government;
- The right to the services and earnings of the child;
- The right to consent to the child's marriage, enlistment in the armed forces of the United States, medical and dental care, and psychiatric, psychological, and surgical treatment;
- The right to represent the child in legal action and to make other decisions of substantial legal significance concerning the child;
- The right to receive and give receipt for payments for the support of the child and to hold or disburse funds for the benefit of the child;
- The right to inherit from and through the child;
- The right to make decisions concerning the child's education; and
- Any other right or duty existing between a parent and child by virtue of law.

The Right to Change Your Mind

Placing your child for adoption is a voluntary decision made by you. When working with an adoption agency for counseling or adoptive family matching, you are not making any legal commitment to adoption. With Children of All Nations' Domestic program, counselors work to provide you with the information and counseling necessary to make a well-thought-out decision prior to matching with an adoptive family. When you are ready to proceed with creating an adoption plan and searching for a potential adoptive family, you are moving forward with the honest intent of placing your child for adoption. You still have the right to change your mind up until the time you sign the Affidavit of Relinquishment, which cannot legally occur any sooner than 48 hours after the child's birth.

The Right to Make a Decision Without Feeling Pressured by Someone Else

This is your pregnancy and your life. The decisions you make at this time are personal to you and will have a profound and lifelong effect on you and your child. No one can tell you what is best for you. You may be feeling overwhelmed now and would love for someone else to take the

decision-making burden off of you, but you are the person that must continue through life with consequences of that choice. This is your decision! Speaking with people who know you best may help give you insight on this situation and evaluate your available support. Be sure to be realistic about those who offer you their assistance however, and be sure they are people who have proven their dedication to you already (parents, siblings, close family friends, etc), and will continue to be a part of your life long-term. It is not uncommon for friends, a boyfriend, or other people you are acquainted with to offer their support to you now (and usually with good intentions), but then end up moving on with their life at some point, pursuing their own goals and interests. Then you are left living your life with the consequences of the decisions you made while considering others' promises. Also, many people feel pressure from family, a boyfriend, uninvolved father, etc. to make certain decisions based on their beliefs and judgments, but again, this is your life and you live with the consequences.

The Right to Select an Adoptive Family

You have decided to make an adoption plan because you have determined adoption is in the best interest of you and your child at this time. So who better to select an adoptive family for your child than you? You have the opportunity to identify a family who can raise your child in a way that you envision. You also have the right to meet in-person or over-the-phone with a family, and review their home study assessment before making any final decision about matching with that family. It is important that you are confident in the couple or individual you have selected to adopt and parent this child you are entrusting them with. After all, you have chosen an adoption plan so that your child will have a chance at life and with a family that will be able to help them reach their full potential!

The Right to Financial Help with Reasonable Expenses for Pregnancy-Related Needs

In the state of Texas, a birth mother is able to receive financial assistance from prospective adoptive parents for pregnancy-related expenses (that cannot be covered through another source) when going through an adoption agency. Some pregnancy-related needs may include healthy food, medical/prenatal care, safe housing, transportation, private legal representation, and private counseling.

The Right to Retain an Attorney

Children of All Nations contracts an adoption attorney who represents the agency and performs the legal matters necessary for the adoption to take place (including generation of the legal documents and court presence necessary for relinquishments, termination of parental rights, and the adoption proceeding). You have a right to hire your own attorney.

Q: How will I know if adoption is right for me?

A: This is a question many pregnant women would like to have answered for them, but one only they can determine. The first thing you need to ask yourself is: "Am I ready to parent this child?" If you don't know the answer, you will need to do research on what it takes to be a responsible parent (financially, emotionally, and physically). CAN's domestic program has counselors to help you explore that very question and tools that may be of assistance to you in determining your readiness to parent. If you find you are ready and capable of providing effective parenting to your child, then by all means, you are encouraged to do so. However, if you know you do not want to be a parent at this time, or find you are unable to provide the kind of life your child deserves, then you have some further considerations to make. You have the options to choose to either place your child in an adoptive home or abort the pregnancy.

Children of All Nations promotes family, so when a woman determines she is not ready to parent the child she is pregnant with, we ask she strongly consider giving her child the gift of life, as an alternative to ending it. Ultimately, adoption is your choice. Just know there are many families who are capable of and ready to become parents, and would love nothing more than to provide your child with a fulfilling life. CAN believes adoption is beneficial for all involved.

- The **birth mother**, who is not ready or unable to parent at this time, is afforded the opportunity to proceed in her life, pursue her goals, and perhaps start a family later when she is ready.
- The **child**, who is given a chance at life and being raised in a stable and nurturing home with a parent or parents who are able to provide all the child needs.
- The **adoptive parent(s)**, who are provided with the opportunity to grow their family by becoming parents of a child who is deserving of a stable family environment.

Q: Do I need to have my mind made up about adoption before receiving services from Children of All Nations' domestic program?

A: No. Our counselors are trained to support expectant mothers like yourself, to help you process your feelings, provide tools to help you assess your readiness to parent, and present options available to you. We cannot and will not proceed with an adoption plan unless you have weighed all your options and have been able to make a well-informed decision. If you decide parenting your child is in the best interest of you and your child, you are encouraged to do so. You do not owe us anything. Should you decide you are not ready to parent, and would like to pursue adoption, your CAN domestic program counselor will work with you on determining the right adoption plan for you and aide in your search for an appropriate adoptive family.

Q: Will the adoption cost me anything?

A: No. CAN's domestic program offers free services for birth parents. Our goal is to help support you through a difficult time in your life and ensure you are provided with all options for your unexpected pregnancy. Should you choose adoption for your child, we will continue

supporting you and present you with eligible, pre-qualified adoptive families, and assist you through the adoption process, all at no cost to you.

Q: Am I able to receive financial help?

A: Yes, if necessitated. This means if you require assistance to continue your pregnancy in a healthy way, and with the intent to place your child for adoption, your chosen adoptive family may provide you with financial assistance in obtaining those needs. This is regulated by our agency, whereas all expenses are closely monitored and recorded. Some examples of acceptable expenses are food, safe housing, medical care, and transportation costs. It is important to note, however, that Texas state law requires we first seek alternate providers to meet your needs, like enrolling you with Medicaid, billing available insurance, or accessing food stamps.

Q: Do I need to have my parent's consent if I am under the age of 18?

A: No. Texas Family Code specifically states a birth parent may legally consent to the adoption, whether you're a minor or not.



Q: Does the birth father need to be involved in the adoption?

A: Texas law does not require that the birth father be notified about adoption unless he is married to the birth mother. The state of Texas has created a paternity registry which allows potential birth fathers to assert their desire to be notified if a specified woman becomes pregnant by him and carries that child to term. We would be required to search the paternity registry prior to terminating his parental rights. It is, however, best practice to notify a known birth father of your pregnancy and adoption plans if you had a significant relationship with him or he has had ongoing positive involvement with you during your pregnancy. This way he will have a chance to learn about adoption, and hopefully, become supportive of your decision and avoid legal complications later.

Q: How is my child's adoptive family chosen?

A: By you. All adoptive families available through CAN's domestic program have undergone an extensive screening process, which includes detailed family history interviews, criminal record clearances, and at least 10 hours of training. You will be able to look through detailed Family Profiles describing each family's interests, lifestyles, family relationships, and religious preferences. You are even encouraged to interview your top choices of families to ask questions and get a better feel for their personality. You have made the choice to place your child with an adoptive family so your child will be provided a lifestyle that you envision for your child's future, so it is most-fitting for you to select the family.

Q: When do I sign the adoption papers?

A: You may sign the paperwork relinquishing your parental rights 48 hours after the birth of the baby. Typically, this step takes place in the hospital prior to the baby's dismissal.

Q: May I change my mind after I sign the adoption paperwork?

A: No. Once you sign the relinquishment paperwork, your decision is final and you may not change your mind. During the course of your relationship with CAN's domestic program, you will receive plenty of information and counseling about the decision you are facing, and therefore, should be signing the relinquishment with confidence in that decision. This doesn't mean it will be easy, but you should be well-prepared.

Q: Will I be able to have contact with my baby after the adoption?

A: Children of All Nations recognizes the benefits of open adoption and encourages it whenever possible and appropriate. You are placing your child with an adoptive family out of love and with high hope for his/her future. This is not an act of abandonment, and therefore it is natural to want to see your child's progress in life. Likewise, the child will be raised with the knowledge of his or her adoption, and will have the desire to know about his birth family. By having contact, you and your child will be reassured of one another's well-being and your child will have the opportunity to know you, his birth mother and/or father, and that you have his or her best interest at heart. There may also come a time when

it is necessary for you and your child to have contact with one another to gain answers to possible medical issues or family genetics. This is much easier to accomplish if there is already contact.

Typically, having open contact means sharing letters and pictures at least twice a year (usually more during the first year), using Children of All Nations as an intermediary. Sometimes the birth parent(s) and the adoptive family agree to maintain a pre-determined amount of telephone contact every year, or even face-to-face visits. The amount and type of contact is something that is worked out between birth families and adoptive families and is dependent upon their comfort level with one another. Over the course of the pregnancy, you and the selected adoptive family will most likely have an opportunity to get to know one another on a more personal level, so the details of openness become more comfortable as your relationship develops. It is more important to note that although you and the adoptive parents come to a mutual agreement about the amount and type of contact you plan to have following the adoption, this agreement is not enforceable by law and can be changed or discontinued by the adoptive family at any time. We hope to alleviate this issue through the education and support we provide prior to the adoption.

Q: Will my child have life-long issues if I place him for adoption?

A: Although no one can predict the future, reliable studies show adopted children are as well-adjusted (and oftentimes better-adjusted) in their lives as compared to children raised by their biological parent(s). Additionally, when an adoption is open, the mystery of the adoption is removed, which helps the child gain a better understanding of the circumstances of their placement. They are able to see the adoption was an act of love where the child was, and still is, the central consideration of all parents involved.

Q: Do you offer pregnancy testing?

A: We know this is a confusing time in your life, and you need every piece of information before you can make an informed decision. Through CAN, you will have access to FREE pregnancy testing.



Children of All Nations (CAN), operated by Great Wall China Adoption, is a division of America's leading international adoption agency. CAN is dedicated to finding permanent homes for children, and we are reaching out to the nations around the world to improve lives and complete families on a global scale. Drawing on more than 15 years of experience in placing children, advocating for improved legislation and international relations and initiating charity programs focused on child welfare, CAN is opening our doors and our hearts to a new, world-wide challenge. By widening our scope globally, we can more fully dedicate ourselves to this purpose and meet our assumed responsibility to orphaned children.

As a division of Great Wall China Adoption, a trusted leader in international adoption with the highest service standards, CAN is built on the solid foundation of a fully Hague accredited, 501(c)(3) non-profit, licensed child-placing organization. Great Wall has had the honor of benefiting thousands upon thousands of Chinese children as a reputable charity organization, in addition to advocating for children's rights and an improved welfare system. Great Wall is also an active participant in building international relations. CAN is happy to carry the knowledge and experience we have gained from our parent organization as we move forward.

CAN's mission is to change children's lives through adoption and offer rewarding ways for people to get involved with the charity work we undertake. To fulfill our mission, we have spent the last few years building and strengthening our relationships with adoption specialists, government officials, court authorities, orphanage directors and caretakers in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and North and South America. We have gained a thorough understanding not only of the adoption processes, but of the local conditions that impact children in need. This understanding ensures that we effectively and reliably manage international adoption for our clients and gives us insight into how we can aid these countries through specific charity initiatives.

We recognize that uniting families through adoption is just one of the many ways we can help improve the lives of children. With this in mind, CAN is taking an active role in making lasting improvements in countries in which we work. Our multiple donation and child sponsorship programs provide less fortunate people with medical care, improve education, build infrastructure, or simply share kind thoughts to brighten someone's day.

CAN believes that every child around the world deserves a permanent home that offers the best possible conditions for emotional and physical development. While we expand to better assist children, we can better serve birth and adoptive families who look to us for a broader range of options.

CAN looks to the future with great enthusiasm and invites you to take the first steps of your adoption journey with us. Together we CAN make a positive change, one step at a time.



Grievance Policy

Complaints by any Birth Parent, any Prospective Adoptive Parent(s), adoptive parent(s) or adoptee about any services or activities of the agency or person, including supervised providers, that he or she believes raises an issue of compliance with the Convention, the Intercountry Adoption Act (IAA) or the regulations implementing the IAA are initially discussed and mediated between the assigned Great Wall China Adoption DBA Children of All Nations case manager and aggrieved party. The following level of staff will address the complaint before a written complaint is filed: Assigned Case Manager, Case Manager Supervisor, and Client Service & Relations Director.

If the complaint is not resolved amicably or to the satisfaction of the aggrieved party, the complaint, signed and dated, may be filed by any prospective adoptive parent(s), adoptive parent(s) or adoptee directly with GWCA/CAN about any services or activities of the agency or person, including supervised providers, that he or she believes raises an issue of compliance with the Convention, the Intercountry Adoption Act (IAA) or the regulations implementing the IAA. GWCA/CAN provides a Complaint/Grievance Form on the Family Only section of our website. This form is also sent to families upon request. Complaints may be submitted online or registered in writing by mail to: Children of All Nations, Attn: Client Service & Relations Director, 248 Addie Roy Rd, A104, Austin, Texas 78746. Unresolved complaints may also be filed by any Prospective Adoptive Parent(s), adoptive parent(s) or adoptee directly with the U.S. State Department via the Hague Complaint Registry (<http://adoptionusca.state.gov/HCRWeb/WelcomeForm.aspx>), about any services or activities of the agency or person, including supervised providers, that he or she believes raises an issue of compliance with the Convention, the Intercountry Adoption Act (IAA) or the regulations implementing the IAA.

All formal complaints received by Great Wall China Adoption DBA Children of All Nations will be reviewed by the Grievance committee and responded to in writing within 30 days. Grievances alleging fraud or deemed time sensitive by the committee will be expedited.

In addition, GWCA/CAN will maintain a written record of complaints received, and follow the steps outlined in the above section to investigate the complaint, and provide response per time frame specified in this policy and procedure. All complaints will be made available to Council on Accreditation or the Secretary upon request. GWCA/CAN will not take any action to discourage a client or prospective client from, or retaliate against a client or prospective client for: making a complaint; expressing a grievance; providing information in writing or interviews to an accrediting entity on our agency's performance; or questioning the conduct of or expressing an opinion about the performance of our agency.

GWCA/CAN will provide to Council on Accreditation and the Secretary, on a semi-annual basis, a summary of all complaints received during the preceding six months with information on number of complaints received and how each complaint was resolved and an assessment of any discernible patterns in complaints received against our agency, along with information about what systemic changes, if any, were made or are planned by our agency in response to such patterns. Upon request by Council on Accreditation or the Secretary, GWCA/CAN will provide any information about complaints received.

GWCA/CAN has a quality improvement program to systematically improve our services by providing client satisfaction surveys to the client(s), conducting regular staff meetings to review practices and improve procedures, reviewing complaint data and evaluating employees performance.

Prohibitions Against Child Buying

Great Wall China Adoption dba Children of All Nations strictly prohibits its employees and agents from giving money or other consideration, directly or indirectly, to a child's parent(s), other individual(s), or an entity as payment for the child or as an inducement to release the child. If permitted or required by the child's country of origin, an agency or person may remit reasonable payments for activities related to the adoption proceedings, pre-birth and birth medical costs, the care of the child, the care of the birth mother while pregnant and immediately following birth of the child, or the provision of child welfare and child protection services generally. Permitted or required contributions shall not be remitted as payment for the child or as an inducement to release the child. Any employee that is found to have offered money or other consideration, directly or indirectly, to a child's parents or other individuals or an entity as payment for a child or to release a child will be terminated immediately. This policy is strictly enforced.

Disruption Policy and Procedures

A disruption is defined as the decision by the Prospective Adoptive Parent(s) to interrupt the placement of a child for adoption during the post-placement period, once they have taken custody of the child and accepted the referral in writing but before the adoption of the referred child has been finalized.

Client(s) understands and agrees that it is the right of all children in a disruption or dissolution to receive full protection and services and the child is deemed the primary client by GWCA/CAN and Client(s).

GWCA/CAN ensures that all appropriate measures for the transfer of a child take place with qualified escorts and in the company of the Client(s). This is ensured through the regulations and procedures outlined by the child's country of origin. GWCA/CAN also ensures this by assigning a bi-lingual guide that travels with the adoptive families throughout the adoption finalization

trip. Client(s) understands and agrees that, if they are considering disruption of the child prior to the adoption finalization, Client(s) must inform their GWCA/CAN Guide or In-Country Representative and/or GWCA/CAN Staff. CAN Staff are available to client(s) 24 hours per day while client(s) are in-country. GWCA/CAN staff may provide resources and information for pediatric experts, social workers, and child development specialists as needed to discuss professional opinions of client concerns. GWCA/CAN staff cannot provide advice on proceeding with the adoption of the child. Steps to assess the child will be taken within the scope of available resources, such as assessing the child for physical or mental concerns. Please note that should a disruption occur while in-country, the future placement of the adoptive child involved in the disruption and the decision to issue a second referral is completely and ultimately made by the Central Authority of the child's country of origin. Great Wall China Adoption dba Children of All Nations has no control over this decision making process. If the decision for disruption remains, the GWCA/CAN Guide or In-Country Representative and/or GWCA/CAN staff will provide assistance to coordinate with client(s), the Central Authority of the child's country of origin and the orphanage or local government, the safe return of the child.

During the post placement period, the foreign government adoption authority will remain the legal guardian of the child. Client(s) understands that if there is any disruption, as that term is defined herein, any costs for care, including medical treatment, are the responsibility of the Prospective Adoptive Parent until the time the custody of the child is remanded to the orphanage.

Client(s) understands and agrees that in the event of an emergency or in the case of a disruption while in-country, at no time ever, will a GWCA/CAN Guide or In-Country Representative assume custody of the adoptive child. Client(s) understands and agrees that the child will remain in the custody of the Prospective Adoptive Parent(s) until the child can be returned to the custody of the orphanage. In the event of an emergency and the Prospective Adoptive Parent(s) cannot adequately care for the child, local or government officials and the adoptive child's orphanage may be contacted by GWCA/CAN to attempt to arrange for an official or a staff member of the orphanage to come to the care of the adoptive child, in local government or official's sole discretion. GWCA/CAN shall not ever assume responsibility for the child during the in-country post placement phase.

Client(s) understands and agrees that Client(s) will not execute any documents, in-country or otherwise, without fully understanding the meaning and consequences of such execution. It is Client(s)' sole responsibility to understand or have all such documents explained.

Client(s) understands and agrees that the adoption documents

signed in-country are legal documents granting legal rights to Client(s) as the adoptive child's parent(s). Completion and signing of the adoption documents assigns and formalizes Client(s) as the child's legal guardian(s). CLIENT(S) UNDERSTANDS AND AGREES THESE DOCUMENTS HAVE PERMANENT AND LASTING CONSEQUENCES.

Client(s) understands that once the adoption is finalized in-country and in accordance with local/government law, the Prospective Adoptive Parent(s) become the legal parent/guardian of the child and the child acquires all the rights, privileges and immunities of a child born to the client(s). The Client(s) understand and agree they will then have all responsibilities, legal obligations and duties to the child as though the child was born to the Client(s). GWCA/CAN cannot reverse this legal and binding relationship. Any child that has been placed for adoption in the United States, cannot return to their country of origin as an orphan without the consent of the Central Authority of the child's country of origin. Client(s) understands and agrees that GWCA/CAN shall inform the Central Authority of the child's country of origin and the Secretary of any disruption. GWCA/CAN shall comply with the all procedures required by the Secretary and the Central Authority of the child's country of origin to ensure that all actions are taken in the best interest of the child, without regard to Client(s).

If applicable and the adoption is not finalized in-country, should the family return to the U.S. or their country of residence during the post placement phase, GWCA/CAN will continue to monitor and supervise, with the assistance of the home study agency as applicable, the required home visits by the State and the foreign government, and the placement of the child prior to the adoption finalization to insure that the placement remains in the best interests of the child. During the post placement period, the foreign government adoption authority, will remain the legal guardian of the child.

GWCA/CAN and the Client(s) will seek to avoid disruption of prospective adoption during placement period prior to final adoption if that is in the best interests of the child. Client(s) will notify CAN promptly if there are significant problems in the relationship or situation of the Client(s) and the child during such time. To the extent it has knowledge and resources, GWCA/CAN shall support and provide resources and appropriate referrals regarding available external assistance such as counseling that Client may engage in at Client's expense.

In the event that counseling and outside resources are not successful in resolving serious difficulties and there is a mutual agreement that the continued placement of the child is not in the child's best interest, it shall be expressed in writing that continuing the post placement period and subsequent final adoption of the child are not in the child's best interest. GWCA/CAN and the Client(s) will establish an agreed-upon date to

effect a change in the custody and physical home of the child. The legal responsibility for transfer of custody in a disruption will remain with the Central Authority of the child's country of origin. GWCA/CAN will cooperatively work with the Secretary of State of the United States and the Central Authority of the child's country of origin who will place the child as they determine is in the child's best interest. The child's age, wishes, length of time in the United States and the availability of other suitable matching placements are factors that will be taken into account by the Central Authority of the child's country of origin when they determine where to place a child. In considering future placement of the child, GWCA/CAN will consider the child's views when appropriate in light of the child's age and maturity and, when required by State law, obtain the consent of the child prior to change in physical home or custody. The Central Authority of the child's country of origin has sole responsibility to determine what placement is in the child's best interests. The child may not be returned to their country of origin as an orphan without the Secretary of State of the United States and the Central Authority of the child's country of origin giving written permission to do so. Returning a child to their country of origin will only be done when the Central Authority of the child's country of origin determines that it is the best suitable option.

During any disruption or crisis involving placement, the Central Authority of the child's country of origin and The Secretary of State of the United States will be notified in writing using email and by telephone contact followed up in writing. When GWCA/CAN is notified by the Client(s) regarding Client(s) intent to disrupt a child or that there are problems that might lead to a disruption, GWCA/CAN will work with Client(s) to resolve these problems and will notify the Secretary of State of the United States and the Central Authority of the child's country of origin as immediately as possible and within no more than 3 business days of the problems and of any attempts to resolve them.

If a placement is disrupted in an emergency situation (where the child or family's safety appears to be at risk), as assessed by GWCA/CAN and in a state where GWCA/CAN is licensed, GWCA/CAN Staff, will go to the Client(s) home to remove the child. GWCA/CAN Staff will alert the appropriate officials, including, but not limited to, law enforcement, CPS, and emergency medical personnel, if the situation warrants this action. If a placement is disrupted in a state where GWCA/CAN is not licensed but uses a Supervised Provider, the Supervised Provider will provide counseling to the Client(s) and written records and recommendations to the GWCA/CAN Staff, and cooperates in all manners reasonable and necessary to arrange for transfer of the custody of the child to a suitable custodian or foster home.

If it is in the best interest of the child, the Client(s) will maintain custody until such suitable placement is made. Financial and medical care of the child will remain the responsibility of the

Client until custody is transferred per the decision of the Central Authority of the child's country of origin. Should this not be in the best interest of the child, GWCA/CAN and/or the Client(s)' home study agency will contact Child Protective Services or other such entity named in the State of Client(s)' residence for emergency placement of the child.

Notwithstanding removal of the child from the Client's home and custody, the Client(s) shall continue to have financial responsibility for all costs required for child's care until such time as CAN is able to effect other placement or return of the child to the foreign country as set forth above, and Client(s) will pay such costs upon billing by GWCA/CAN.

Client(s) must adhere to the post-placement reporting requirements set forth by the Central Authority of the child's country of origin. Client(s) are required to provide all necessary information for the reports and cooperate with social workers to meet all state, convention country post-placement requirements before the adoption is finalized.

GWCA/CAN will supervise the placement until such time GWCA/CAN receives an order declaring the adoption as final. During the post-placement services, GWCA/CAN will send regular reminders to the Client(s) regarding the non-finalized status of their adoption and stress the importance of adoption finalization. Once GWCA/CAN receives the order declaring the adoption as final, GWCA/CAN Hague Coordinator will inform the Secretary in any manner requested by the Secretary within 30 days of receipt of order.

Dissolution Policy

A dissolution is defined as the decision by the Prospective Adoptive Parent(s) to dissolve the adoption of the referred child after the adoption has been finalized. In accordance with the standards of the Hague Convention for International Adoption, please review our Dissolution Policy below:

In the event that dissolution occurs once the adoption is finalized in the United States, the matter becomes a domestic matter that would follow U.S. Federal and State guidelines for domestic adoption. In the event of dissolution, at no time ever will Great Wall China Adoption dba Children of All Nations assume custody of the adoptive child.

Once the adoption is finalized in accordance with regulations set forth by the child's country of origin, the Prospective Adoptive Parent(s) become the legal parent/guardian of the child and the child acquires all the rights, privileges and immunities of a child born to the client(s). Great Wall China Adoption dba Children of All Nations does not and cannot have any influence regarding the steps within this legal matter. The act of leaving your newly-adopted child in-country or attempting to return the child to their country of origin, after you have signed the adoption

paperwork, is highly illegal. Failure to comply could result in civil and criminal penalties for such behavior and CAN cannot be responsible for the actions of the government officials both in the U.S. and the child's country of origin. This act would be considered second abandonment, and action may be taken by government officials both in the U.S. and the child's country of origin for individuals who engage in this activity.

In the event of dissolution, all post adoption reports MUST still be submitted to the Central Authority of the child's country of origin on behalf of the child. We request cooperation in submitting these reports to ensure the well-being of each child.

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Disclosure of fees used to provide special services: Great Wall and CAN does not currently have any programs in place for providing special services, such as cultural programs for adoptees, scholarships, grant programs or other services which would require the support of the Prospective Adoptive Parent(s). All fees collected are used specifically for adoption services and for orphanage support and maintenance as required by the foreign government policies or law.

Additional Fees Charged beyond Disclosed in Contract: Great Wall and CAN will not charge for services outside of the adoption service agreement. Should unexpected expenses arise in the Convention country; Great Wall and CAN will adhere to the following policy:

- Notify the client in writing of the updated fees and expenses via email and/or mail.
- Obtain written consent prior to expending any funds regardless of whether the fund in excess of \$1000.00, that is standard with the Hague requirements.
- Great Wall and CAN will not charge any additional fees without obtaining a written consent. Great Wall and CAN will not ask for waiver from the prospective adoptive parents because written consent from the prospective adoptive parent ensures that prospective adoptive parents are fully aware of the additional fees, and agree to the additional fees.
- Great Wall and CAN will provide written receipt to prospective adoptive parents for fees and expenses paid directly by Great Wall and CAN in the convention country and retain copies of the receipts.

The following information is available upon request: number of placements in the last 3 years including % of disruptions/dissolutions; number of applications on a yearly basis based on the past 3 years; number of children eligible for adoption.